

to develop a national foreign language strategy.

Some of our proposals have become law. Others were passed by the Senate, but the House refused to consider them. The Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 established two things promoted in our legislation. First, a rotation program to help mid-level Federal employees in the intelligence community improve their skills; and second, a scholarship program for individuals who possess critical skills, especially those in science, math, and foreign language, in exchange for service with the Federal Government.

Still, America should rightly ask: why has it been so hard to make even these modest improvements? Especially when there have been numerous national studies and commissions that conclude we need to do better at educating Americans.

In 2001, the Hart-Rudman Commission said that America needs a workforce skilled in science, math, computer science, and engineering. They said that the failure to foster these skills was jeopardizing America's position as a global leader. The commission also found that the maintenance of American power in the world depends upon the quality of U.S. Government personnel. It requires employees with more expertise in more countries, regions, and issues. This includes a commitment to language education.

Legislation that I introduced along with my colleagues, some of which dates back to 2001, contains vital components that should be considered as we debate the President's proposed education initiatives.

Some of these programs include: Funding the Federal Government's student loan repayment program for positions critical to national security and for staff with science and foreign language skills; providing financial incentives, including subsidized loans, for students earning degrees in science, mathematics, engineering, or a foreign language; establishing grant programs for local educational agencies that engage in public-private partnerships to improve science and math education; awarding fellowships to students who agree to work for the Federal Government and to Federal workers who wish to develop skills in critical national security fields; encouraging early foreign language study in our elementary and secondary schools by establishing foreign language partnerships for teacher training; promoting innovative foreign language programs through grants to higher education institutions; and establishing a National Foreign Language Coordination Council and language director to develop and oversee the implementation of a national language strategy that reflects input from all sectors of society.

The intent of these programs is to support a revitalized, re-energized educational system in these critical areas from elementary through graduate school and improve the skills of our current labor force.

Some of the programs would enhance certain skills of our Nation's teachers at all levels while providing them with the tools they need to sustain the development of our Nation's youth.

For example, one program would develop foreign language partnerships between local schools and higher education foreign language departments to enhance teacher training and develop appropriate foreign language curricula.

If we want to ensure America's future competitiveness in global markets, we need to engage America's industry in assisting our youth to develop the skills industry needs to compete.

Another program proposed in our legislation establishes public-private partnerships to encourage the donation of scientific laboratory equipment, provide internship and mentoring opportunities, and to award scholarship funds for students in critical areas.

To survive in a diverse world, Americans need to harness their natural diversity and expand linkages to their larger community. Education must be seen as a community effort.

We must think more broadly when it comes to foreign languages. The program that Senator DURBIN and I envisioned includes immersion programs where students take a science or technology related class in a non-English speaking country, or a cultural awareness program in which foreign language students study the science and technology issues of that country. It is important to understand what other countries are doing in science and technology before foreign innovations surpass our own.

I am glad that President Bush has recognized that action must be taken to improve education in these critical areas by calling for increasing the ranks of advanced placement and international baccalaureate teachers and expanding access to AP and IB classes. I also thank him for finally taking steps to strengthen foreign language education in the U.S. with the National Security Language Initiative.

However, real commitments need to be made.

If we do not see education as a continual process for both the student and the teacher, a process designed to engage younger and older generations alike, then we will have created a product of only limited duration—a band-aid for our intellectual security.

We need to think beyond high school and college level work. We need to engage all levels of schooling and, beyond that, we need to enhance our current workforce. We cannot afford to neglect today's workforce if we want to be successful building our future.

I yield the remainder of my time. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I understand there is 12 minutes remaining on our side in morning business and then we will go to the bill itself.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield 12 minutes, and then I ask for recognition because I intend to speak on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

FAIRNESS IN ASBESTOS INJURY RESOLUTION ACT OF 2005

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 852, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 852) to create a fair and efficient system to resolve claims of victims of bodily injury caused by asbestos exposure, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary, with amendments.

[Strike the parts shown in black brackets and insert the parts shown in italic.]

S. 852

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Fairness in Asbestos Injury Resolution Act of 2005" or the "FAIR Act of 2005".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings and purpose.
Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—ASBESTOS CLAIMS RESOLUTION

Subtitle A—Office of Asbestos Disease Compensation

Sec. 101. Establishment of Office of Asbestos Disease Compensation.
Sec. 102. Advisory Committee on Asbestos Disease Compensation.
Sec. 103. Medical Advisory Committee.
Sec. 104. Claimant assistance.
Sec. 105. Physicians Panels.
Sec. 106. Program startup.
Sec. 107. Authority of the Administrator.

Subtitle B—Asbestos Disease Compensation Procedures

Sec. 111. Essential elements of eligible claim.
Sec. 112. General rule concerning no-fault compensation.
Sec. 113. Filing of claims.
Sec. 114. Eligibility determinations and claim awards.
Sec. 115. Medical evidence auditing procedures.

Subtitle C—Medical Criteria

Sec. 121. Medical criteria requirements.